ACCULTURATION, PARENTAL CONTROL, AND ADJUSTMENT AMONG ASIAN INDIAN WOMEN

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The present study examines the relationship between acculturation, parental control, and psychological adjustment among adult first and second-generation Asian Indian women who have immigrated, or whose parents have immigrated to the United States, from the Indian state of Kerala. Data from 73 participants indicate second-generation immigrants report poorer psychological adjustment than do their counterparts. Additionally, regression analyses reveal discomfort towards Kerala culture significantly predicts depressive symptoms, while high maternal control predicts self-esteem. Qualitative data were collected to provide richer understanding of immigrants' adaptation to the U.S. Implications of this research may impact mental health practitioners' ability to improve quality of life with Asian Indian women from Kerala.

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INTRODUCTION

America is often seen as the land of opportunity, security, and prosperity; consequently, an increasing number of immigrants come to the United States seeking a better life. Of these immigrant groups, Asian Americans are one of the largest, most diverse, and fastest growing ethnic minority populations (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000). According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, the total number of Asians residing in the United States is estimated to be around 12.5 million (2000). Asian Indians make up the third largest Asian population, and represent one of the fastest growing populations in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000). By the year 2050, the number of Asian Indians living in the United States is predicted to be at two million (Bouvier & Agresta, 1985; O'Hare & Felt, 1991). Due to the rise of Asian Indians entering the United States, the need for researchers to address this population is increasingly critical.

Although the literature on Asians is slowly increasing, there is a tendency to place all Asian subgroups together and ignore the unique attributes of each group (Durvasula & Mylvaganam, 1994). Specifically, Asian Indians warrant separate research and exploration since their culture is distinct from other Asian groups. Furthermore, Asian Indians are a heterogeneous group in themselves. Saran (1985) states that each regional subgroup of India has its own history, practices, languages, values, and customs that are unique. For instance, an Asian Indian immigrant may feel they have little in common with another Asian Indian immigrant who has come from a different Indian state (Durvasula & Mylvaganam, 1994). Hence, it is also necessary to examine within group differences.

Thus far, much of the literature on Asian Indian immigrants has been theoretical, focusing on identifying acculturative stressors for this group. However, few studies have

investigated psychological functioning among Asian Indian immigrants. Acculturative issues such as racism, prejudice, culture shock, language barriers, and conflicting values are probable struggles that are likely to have an impact on psychological adjustment (Das & Kemp, 1997). Moreover, as traditional Asian Indian culture emphasizes collectivistic values and strict adherence to gender roles, Asian Indian women living in the United States are particularly likely to experience cultural value conflicts with respect to gender role expectations and decision making (Inman, Constantine, & Ladany, 1999). Addressing Asian Indians' mental health concerns is essential. The purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship of acculturation, family dynamics, and psychological adjustment among first and second-generation immigrant women from the Indian state of Kerala.

Asian Indians

Immigration to the United State

Throughout history, Asian Indian immigrants have primarily come to America seeking better educational and/or occupational opportunities for themselves and their families (Saran & Eames, 1980). Asian Indians have come to the United States in three major immigration waves. The first wave of Asian Indian immigrants—numbered to be about 7,300—consisted of male migrant workers from the Indian state of Punjab between the late 1890s and the early 1900s (Leonard, 1992). These Punjabi laborers settled mostly in California and the Pacific Northwest; some were farmers and others were recruited to work among railroad, steamship, and lumber companies. According to Leonard, the growth of the Punjabi community was cut short due to the 1917 Immigration Act, which prohibited further immigration from India, as well as the Immigration Law of 1924, which prohibited recent immigrants from bring family members to the U.S. Consequently, a number of immigrants either intermarried Mexican women or returned to

India. However, along with facing intense hostility and discrimination, these immigrants were not permitted to own property or become U.S. citizens.

The second-wave of immigration occurred after the U.S Immigration Act of 1965 was passed (Saran & Eames, 1980). A vast number of Asian Indian immigrants came to the U.S and obtained white collar jobs. Compared to other immigrant groups, these immigrants were fluent in English and highly skilled and educated professionals. Through family reunification visas, these settled immigrants had the opportunity to bring family members such as spouses, parents, or siblings to the United States (Juthani, 1992). This led to a third wave of new arrivals, which included both professionals and a working and lower middle class population. Compared to their preceding counterparts, this group was more heterogeneous in regards to educational and occupational status and English proficiency. Among all three waves of Asian Indian immigrants, it is evident most have come to the United States voluntarily to pursue professional and/or economic opportunities. Specifically, immigrants from the Indian state of Kerala (referred to as *Malayalees* or *Keralites*) make up 85% percent of Asian Indian immigrants in the United States (Joseph, 1992).

Kerala

Studies examining within group differences among Asian Indians are few, and published psychological research on Asian Indians from the state of Kerala is virtually nonexistent. Kerala is a southern state of India with a population of about 30 million people. According to Parayil (1996), "Kerala has become an enigma to analysts of international development, social progress, and peaceful social change in the Third World" (p. 941). In less than thirty years, Kerala has accomplished dramatic improvements in decreasing infant mortality rates, reducing population growth, and lowering the death rate. Furthermore, life expectancy is highest for Kerala compared

to other Indian states: 74 for women (compared to India's national average of 60) and 71 for men (compared to India's national average of 59) (Parayil, 1996). Kerala also boasts the highest literacy rate of India, with a literacy rate of 90% for the total population (compared to India's national average of 65.3%), 94.2 % for males (compared to India's national average of 75.9%), and 87.8 % for females (compared to India's national average of 54.2%; Chacko, 2003). In addition, women of Kerala are found to have higher educational attainment compared to the rest of the women in India (Chacko). Factors such as the literacy, birth, and death rate of Kerala suggest the social development of this Indian state is higher compared to the rest of India. Although Kerala has made significant social improvements in several areas within a short duration of time, the economic condition and the mental health issues of its people are rather concerning.

Kerala holds the highest unemployment rate in India, despite the high literacy rate and educational attainment of its people (Parayil, 1996). Limited employment and economic strains are likely to cause some level of psychological distress. As a result, many Keralites have chosen to immigrate to the United Kingdom, the Middle East, or the United States to seek better job opportunities that may fit with their educational status. Inadequate job opportunities combined with high education may be a contributing factor to the high percentage of Keralites who decide to immigrate to the United States (Parayil).

According to George (2002), "the mental health status of the people of Kerala is rather poor" (p. 5). For several years, Kerala has had the highest rates of crime and alcohol consumption in India. Additionally, Chacko (2003) reported that incidences of physical crimes against women have quadrupled between 1991 and 1997. More clinically significant is the suicide rate in Kerala, which is dramatically higher for both sexes compared to the rest of the

country (George, 2002). For several years, the suicide rate in Kerala has remained consistently high and appears to have increased steadily over the last ten years (George, 2002; Kandamuthan, 1998). In 2002, as many as 9,810 individuals committed suicide in Kerala, which is about three times the national average of India (George, 2002). Furthermore, the men of Kerala appear to be more likely to commit suicide than the women of Kerala; however, no published data has documented the number of attempted suicides made by males and females (Kandamuthan, 1998). The rapid social changes that have been taking place in Kerala have been considered to play a role in both the mental health status and suicide rate of the people in Kerala (George, 2002). In addition, Kandamuthan (1998) has attributed factors such as family problems, prolonged illness, increased alcohol use, and economic strain as additional reasons for the suicide rate in Kerala.

Another area in which Kerala is distinct from the rest of India is in the religious affiliation of its people. Religion generally plays a significant role in the lives of most Asian Indians, and its function in the culture should not be underestimated (Ghuman, 2003; Williams, 1988). Eighty-one percent of the total population of India is made up of Hindus, making Hinduism the primary religion of India. On the other hand, only 2 % of the population identify themselves as Christians, making Christianity one of the less dominant religions of India (Williams, 1988). Forty percent of the population in Kerala identify themselves as Christians, making Kerala India's most Christian populated state.

In 2001, the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) found Christianity remains a dominant religion in the United States (U.S Census Bureau, 2004). Interestingly, Kerala Christians are a minority in India, but when they enter the United States, they may be considered as a part of the majority in respect to religion. This may make their acculturative experiences different compared to other immigrants from India. For example, Hindu or Muslim immigrants

may have different dietary and/or dress restrictions due to their religion, which can set them apart from the majority population. Furthermore, they may observe different religious holidays, hold special wedding practices, and follow distinct customs that may have been easier for them to carry out in India. Another obstacle may be limited places of worship, particularly in locations that have a low number of Hindu or Muslim immigrants in a proximate area. Not having a place of worship may be especially problematic, given the importance of religion in Indian culture. Additionally, religious institutions have been identified as a means to create a community and transmit cultural values among immigrants (Ghuman, 2003). Kerala Christians may be less likely to experience these particular barriers while living in the United States. They may however experience some level of stereotype from others in the majority population, who might assume all individuals who emigrate from India are Hindu or Muslim.

Concerning its quality of life, educational opportunities, and religious affiliation, Kerala is different from other Indian states. Therefore, the acculturative experience of Keralite immigrants is likely to differ from other Asian Indian immigrants who have come to the United States. Although Kerala has many factors that distinguish it from other Indian states, the core cultural values and belief systems of Kerala do not differ significantly from the rest of India.

Cultural Values and Beliefs among Asian Indians

Researchers have considered the culture of the United States to be primarily individualistic, and the culture of India to be collectivistic (Saran & Eames, 1980; Segal, 1991). Collectivistic societies are generally thought to place more importance on the group—or the family—rather than the individual. For instance, an individual is typically expected to make sacrifices for the good of the family in collectivistic culture. In Asian Indian culture, a strong attachment and sense of responsibility to the family form the very core of the culture

(Prathikanti, 1997; Segal, 1998). The traditional family structure of India has typically been patriarchal, extended, and interdependent (Segal, 1998). Gender roles and expectations are clearly defined. Men are the primary wage earners, decision makers, and disciplinarians of the household. Along with career responsibilities, women act as primary caretakers and nurturers of the family. Children are expected to respect elders, obey authority without question, and bring honor to the family (Ranganath & Ranganath, 1997; Segal, 1998). Family harmony and interdependence are also highly encouraged among Asian Indian families (Dhruvarajan, 1993; Ranganath & Ranganath, 1997). The traditional patterns found in the Indian family generally contrast with those of the typical European American family, where family structure is often nuclear, egalitarian, and individualistic (Ranganath & Ranganath, 1997; Segal, 1998). Therefore, when Asian Indian immigrants enter the United States, they are surrounded by a culture that holds different views of the family compared to their own.

Goals related to child rearing are perhaps the most significant difference between European American families and Asian Indian families. The United States is typically considered an individualistic culture, and European American parents generally raise their children to be autonomous, assertive, and self-reliant (Ahmed, 1999; Jambunathan, 2000). European American parents generally use inductive reasoning with their children, allow choices for their children, and encourage children to be active explorers of their environment (Jambunathan). Furthermore, they may emphasize values in their children that encourage them to "think for themselves" or "become their own person" (Ahmed). Therefore, it is common for persons socialized within this cultural context to experiment individually with choices such as vocational aspirations or romantic relationships that are suitable for them.

Unlike their European American peers, both female and male Asian Indian children are socialized not to be autonomous but instead dependent on family. Females in particular are socialized to be dependent at every stage of life—first, on her father, next on her husband, and finally on her son (Segal, 1998). Durvasula and Mylvaganam (1994, p.99) stated that for Asian Indians "the goal of parenting is not to provide the children with sufficient skills to leave the family but to instill a sense of obligation and duty" to the family. Since one's identity and roles are already established within the family and community, the concept of "needing to find one's self" may be difficult to comprehend in traditional Asian Indian families (Ahmed, 1999). Beginning at a young age, Asian Indian parents usually encourage dependency on the caregiver (Jambunathan and Burts, 2003). There is evidence this pattern of dependency may continue throughout adulthood. In a study comparing adult mother-daughter relationships between Asian Indian women, European American women, and Mexican American women, Asian Indian women were more likely to exhibit behaviors such as being connected with their mothers, seeking advice and support from their mothers, and deferring to their mothers (Rastogi & Wampler, 1999). This data suggests that throughout life stages, the importance of subordination to parents is stressed, while independence is generally opposed in Asian Indian families. This may explain why there are often high levels of parental involvement in major life choices among Asian Indians.

In Asian Indian families, decisions made are often highly influenced by parents and other elders in the family (Ranganath & Ranganath, 1997; Segal, 1998). Parents often play a role in decision-making because they believe they are more experienced, and feel their children do not have enough life experience (Segal). Additionally, a greater level of parental control may be exerted among Asian Indian children in order to instill a sense of obligation to the family and

discourage independence. In Asian Indian culture, parents usually have a strong influence in choices such as the career their child pursues, and more importantly—the person they will marry (Segal).

The concept and value of marriage in the Indian culture differs from that of Western culture. Marriage is seen as a permanent alliance not only between two individuals, but also between two families (Das & Kemp, 1997; Prathikanti, 1997). Divorce is highly stigmatized in the Asian Indian culture, and the divorce rates among the Asian Indians in India and America are typically low (Saran & Eames, 1980; Segal, 1998). Casual dating is frequently strongly discouraged and sexual purity—more so in girls—is enforced. In traditional Indian culture, arranged marriage—where parents, relatives, and/or significant elders find a suitable marriage partner for an individual—is the most common form of marriage. Arranged marriages continue to remain common even among Asian Indians who have immigrated and settled to the United States for a long period of time (Baptiste, 2005).

Research has found Asian Indian parents often fear dating will lead to sexual involvement (Segal, 1991) or sexual assault in girls (Dasgupta, 1998). Other authors theorize that Asian Indian parents may fear dating could lead to their children marrying interracially or even outside of their subgroup, thereby losing their culture (Durvasula & Mglvaganam, 1994). Furthermore, since the divorce rate is higher in the United States compared to India, Asian Indian parents in the United States may also worry that interracial marriage may end in divorce (Segal, 1991). Therefore, selection of a marriage partner is rarely done autonomously, but rather through familial and even community involvement. Unlike previous generations where a potential bride or groom had little say in the final marriage decision, “modern” arranged

marriages allow the prospective bride or groom to have considerable autonomy in the final marriage choice (Gupta, 1999).

Along with choosing a marriage partner, Asian Indian parents typically have a strong influence in the career choices of their children. Asian Indians are often achievement-oriented and set high aspirations for their children to succeed (Saran & Eames, 1980; Segal 1991). Even at the preschool age, parents value educating children academically and facilitating the development of cognitive skills (Jambunathan & Burts, 2003). For example, compared to European American, African American, Hispanic American, and other Asian American children, Asian Indian preschoolers were found to regard themselves as being more cognitively competent (Jambunathan & Burts, 2003). Asian Indian children are typically encouraged to attend college and pursue professional degrees in medicine, law, or business, whereas degrees in liberal arts and social sciences are often discouraged (Sala, 2002). Currently, statistics show Asian Indians make up the highest proportion of the total U.S. population to have a Bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). This further indicates the value Asian Indians place on education and academic success.

It appears the goals Asian Indians have for themselves and their children to succeed in academics and career are primarily individualistic; however, this may not be the case. In her qualitative study with Asian Indian immigrants, Dasgupta (1989) found that parents drove their children to succeed in order to "fight the stigma attached to the minority status (22)." These parents felt their children could gain respect and success in American society through excelling in their education. However, the drive to be successful could also stem from a commitment and responsibility to both the family and the Asian Indian community (Sala, 2002; Saran, 1985). Asian Indian children may be expected to be high achievers in order to bring honor to the family

name. Thus, apparent individualism may serve collectivistic goals in regards to academic achievement among Asian Indians.

An additional characteristic of Asian Indian culture is the role the community plays in the life of an individual. Asian Indians are allocentric (group oriented) and therefore, there is a sense of obligation to both family and the group as a whole (Segal, 1998). The Asian Indian community is a close-knit group and an individual's social network can be quite extensive. The strong sense of support and unity within the community can be highly adaptive and invaluable for an individual. However, because the Asian Indian community is such a tightly knit group, children are often under a great deal of pressure from parents to maintain a good reputation since others in the community are "always watching" (Baptiste, 2005; Segal, 1991). Beginning with early childhood, children are aware of and taught to protect the honor of the family and to preserve a good family name (Jambunathan & Burts, 2003). Conformity and behaviors promoting group harmony are highly encouraged. Therefore, parents may restrict their children from engaging in behaviors that may lead to behaviors that could possibly dishonor the family. For instance, restrictions may be placed on time spent outside the home with friends, members of different ethnic groups, and members of the opposite sex (Sala, 2002). The cultural value of preserving the family name may also serve a role in explaining the high level of parental control among Asian Indian families.

To summarize, Asian Indian culture has been identified as an allocentric culture, where greater importance is placed on the group rather than the individual. A deep obligation and commitment to the family forms the foundation of Asian Indian culture. Often, parents and elders play a significant role in decision making for major life events of their children. Children in turn are expected to bring honor to the family name by obeying their parents and elders and

keeping a good reputation within the Asian Indian community. Such values are often in contrast with the cultural norms of the United States, where values related to individualism are more likely to be stressed. As a result, Asian Indians who immigrate to the United States are faced with the challenging experience of adapting in a new, unfamiliar cultural context.

Acculturation

Major Models of Acculturation

The term acculturation refers to the changes that a group or individual experiences when they enter a new and different cultural context. Currently, there appear to be two primary models of acculturation: the unidimensional model and the multidimensional model. Unidimensional models of acculturation view the acculturative process as being along a continuum, where behaviors and values of the culture of origin are lost and replaced with the behaviors and values of the host culture (Cabassa, 2003; Castro, 2003). In contrast, multidimensional models of acculturation acknowledge that the individual or group can maintain their culture of origin as well as adapt to the host culture (Cabassa, 2003; Castro, 2003). Much debate exists in the acculturation literature between these two perspectives.

Within unidimensional models, it is implicitly assumed that assimilation (accepting host culture, while rejecting culture of origin) is the single style of acculturation for immigrants. Hence, the primary limitation of unidimensional models is that it does not allow for an individual to adapt to the dominant culture and still maintain traits of their culture of origin (Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995). Further criticisms of unidimensional models note that it fails to reflect the current zeitgeist and that it is biased towards the dominant culture (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). In contrast, multidimensional models allow for the maintenance of the culture of origin and for the adaptation to host culture to occur independently. However, a criticism of the

multidimensional model is that it assumes individuals are free to choose their acculturation patterns (Ghuman, 2003). In some societies, the host culture may promote or even force immigrants to conform to the dominant culture. In addition, although multidimensional models have enriched the understanding of the acculturative process, many of these models either have not been empirically tested or have had methodological or conceptual limitations (Ryder et al.). In terms of parsimony, unidimensional models of acculturation offer a simplistic approach to acculturation and appear to be used more often in previous studies. However, multidimensional models are much broader and appear to be more inclusive.

Berry's Model of Acculturation

John Berry's model of acculturation is possibly the most widely used multidimensional model of acculturation. In Berry's model, four distinct strategies of acculturation are identified: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization (Berry, 1980). Assimilation refers to individuals who do not wish to retain aspects of their cultural of origin, and instead immerse themselves in the dominant culture. Separation, on the other hand, occurs when an individual rejects the dominant culture and holds on to their culture of origin. Integration refers to individuals who prefer to adopt patterns of the dominant culture as well as keep their culture of origin. Finally, marginalization occurs when an individual rejects both the dominant culture and culture of origin. The major shortcoming of Berry's model is that it fails to recognize the influence the host society has on the immigrant's decision to adapt (Ghuman, 2003). Additionally, Ryder et al. (2000) note several researchers have criticized Berry's model for conceptual and methodological reasons. Despite these limitations, the model is extensively used has been applied in a number of empirical studies with diverse immigrant populations.

Measuring Acculturation

Acculturation has been measured by researchers in various ways. Instruments based on the unidimensional model of acculturation ask respondents to rate their preference for different cultural domains along a linear continuum, ranging from very much for their culture of origin to very much for the host culture (Cabassa, 2003). Other studies have relied on proxy variables such as the number of years in the United States, generational status, and place of education to measure acculturation (Cabassa, 2003). However, the use of unidimensional measures as well as proxy variables to assess acculturation gives a limited view of an individual's acculturative experience—mainly since these measures and variables assume an immigrant can only assimilate.

Acculturation instruments constructed from multidimensional models are thought to portray the realities and challenges of the acculturation process more clearly than do unidimensional models (Cabassa, 2003). Instruments typically consist of two different dimensions that separately measure adaptation to the host culture and maintenance of the culture of origin. The domains of acculturation that are generally assessed are language usage, identity, and preference for food, television, music, and friendships. However, minimal attention has been given to measures and items that examine acculturative changes in core cultural beliefs, attitudes, and values (Cabassa, 2003; Castillo, Conoley, & Brossart, 2004). This is significant since an immigrant can indeed accept and begin to practice behaviors of a new culture, and simultaneously hold on to the core beliefs and values of their culture of origin. Evidence reviewed by Castillo et al. has shown that acculturation measures that take an immigrant's cultural values and attitudes into account are better predictors of psychological distress than measures that use items that assess behavioral acculturation. Thus, when measuring

acculturation, the need to consider changes of immigrants' cultural values and beliefs is as important as assessing behavior changes.

Patterns of Acculturation among Asian Indians

A few authors have conducted empirical studies to examine patterns of acculturation among Asian Indians. An early study conducted by Sodowsky & Carey (1988) found most of the Asian Indians in their sample identified themselves as being *Very Indian*, whereas 21% of them viewed themselves as *Bicultural* and 7% as *Very American*. Dhruvarajan (1993) used length of stay in the host country to predict ethnic cultural retention and transmission among first generation Asian Indian Hindu immigrants in Canada. His findings indicate that length of stay explained behavioral aspects of adaptation (i.e., language used in home), but failed to explain patterns of acculturation in the domain of family values.

Research assessing acculturation using Berry's model has found mixed results. Several authors have found integration to be a prevalent method of acculturation in their samples of Asian Indians (Abouguendia & Noels, 2001; Farver, Bhadha, & Narang, 2002; Krishnan & Berry, 1992). Additionally, Farver, Narang, & Bhadha (2002) found both integration and assimilation to be equally prevalent among their sample of adolescents and their parents (more adolescents reported being assimilated in this sample). Interestingly, in another study of Asian Indian adolescents and parents carried out by Kwak & Berry (2001), separate acculturation scores were obtained for three major domains: cultural traditions, language, and marriage. In this study, both adolescents and parents were more likely to report integrated attitudes towards cultural traditions and language, while endorsing separation attitudes towards the domain of marriage. Overall, current empirical research suggests that Asian Indians are more likely to adapt

by keeping aspects of Asian Indian culture as well as adopting certain aspects of the host culture, rather than losing all aspects of Asian culture or accepting all aspects of the host culture.

Qualitative studies done with Asian Indians may further explain patterns of adaptation among this immigrant group. In their seminal work with Asian Indian Canadian immigrants, Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil (1981) concluded that Asian Indians "have accepted changes in more 'pragmatic values' but have resisted alterations in their 'core values' " (p. 939). For instance, practical changes such as use of the English language, disciplinary practices with children, clothing, and division of responsibilities within the home have been adopted, while cultural beliefs related to family, marriage, dating practices, and gender role expectations have been maintained (Dhruvarajan, 1993; Inman et al., 1999; Patel, Power, & Bhavnagri, 1996; Wakil et al., 1981). This tendency to hold on to core values appears to be consistent with the literature that suggests that behavioral aspects of a new culture are acquired more rapidly than values of the new culture among immigrant populations (Inman et. al, 1999). It is probable that the cultural values of a new culture would take longer to adopt since these values play such an integral role in the individual's self-perception and social functioning.

Psychosocial Functioning among Asian Indians

Psychological Functioning

Limited published research is available concerning the psychological health of Asian Indian immigrants in the United States. However, a number of studies currently exists examining mental health issues among Asian Indian immigrants in regions such as the United Kingdom. In a significant study conducted by Patel and Gaw (1996), patterns of suicide were examined among Asian Indians who immigrated to Great Britain, South Africa, Fiji, Singapore, and Malaysia. The suicide rate of female Asian Indian immigrants was found to be higher compared

to their male counterparts and to the indigenous populations of the countries to which they immigrate. Hanging, burning, and poisoning were the most common methods of suicide among females. Additionally, immigrants who were Hindu committed suicide at dramatically higher rates in comparison to Muslim and Christian immigrants. In addition, no relationship was found between social class and suicide rates. Patel and Gaw (1996) reported family conflict as a common precipitating factor in a number of suicides, whereas mental illness was rarely cited as a cause. Raleigh (1996) further confirmed the high suicide rate among Asian Indian immigrant women in England and Wales, and noted rates were particularly high among females between the ages of 15-34. Additional research also suggests suicide rates among Asian Indian females may be strongly attributed to sociocultural factors such as cultural and familial conflict (Hicks & Bhugra, 2003). Although official data concerning suicide patterns of Asian Indian immigrants in the United States is scarce, several researchers have studied familial factors, cultural value conflicts, and acculturative stress within this population.

Family Functioning

Immigrating to the United States brings some level of disruption to the traditional Indian familial systems. Nearly two decades ago, Saran and Eames (1980) predicted intergenerational cultural conflicts would be the chief source of strain among immigrating Asian Indian parents and their children. Current research has confirmed their hypothesis and identified intergenerational culture conflicts as being salient to the Asian Indian community. Recent studies have examined the concerns and viewpoints of both Asian Indian immigrant parents and their children.

Baptiste (2005) identified primary concerns Asian Indian immigrant parents experience in the United States. A few of these apprehensions include fear of losing children to the U.S.

culture, loss of parental authority over children (including the ability to choose a spouse), and loss of face within the Asian Indian community due to children's out-of-culture behaviors. Segal (1991) found parents in her study perceived adolescents to be "rebellious" and "contaminated" by American culture when arguments arose surrounding dating and gaining independence. Conflict between parents and adolescents is fairly normal and expected in American society; however, this concept may be distressing for Asian Indian immigrant parents who value interdependence, family harmony, and complete obedience to authority (Segal, 1998).

Studies of second-generation adolescent and adult immigrants reveal experiences of family conflicts due to disagreements in areas such as parental control, poor communication, dating and marriage, and expectation of excellence (Dugsin, 2001; Segal, 1991). For instance, adolescents in Segal's (1991) study described communication with parents as generally being one-sided. Moreover, the pressure Asian Indian parents placed on their adolescents to excel and pursue only favorable careers also caused tensions within the family. Several adolescents in Segal's (1991) study were average achievers, and yet experienced low self-esteem or felt like failures for not being an above average achiever. Similar concerns regarding significant pressures to succeed were expressed by adult second generation immigrants (Dusgin, 2001). Additionally, given the contrasting cultural perspectives on love between American and Indian culture, family conflicts in the area of marriage and dating are particularly salient within Asian Indian families (Dugsin, 2001; Segal, 1991)

Asian Indian immigrant parents and their children have been found to manage intergenerational cultural conflicts in complex ways. In Dugsin's (2001) study, second-generation immigrants were found to either accept or reject Indian family values. Indian values were more likely to be accepted when participants' self-esteem and acceptance were derived

from their family of origin. Deepak (2005) identified code switching as a strategy among second-generation immigrants, where individuals conform to the expectations appropriate for the cultural context in which they are. For example, they may behave in alliance with Asian Indian culture at the home, while acting in a way similar to dominant American culture in the school or workplace. Lying or hiding information from parents (even as adults) in order to prevent conflict has also been found as a method to deal with parental cultural clashes (Dugsin, 2001; Segal, 1998). For instance, many Asian Indian adolescents and young adults have been found to hide significant romantic relationships and even marriage partners from their parents (Gupta, 1999; Segal, 1998).

Among Asian Indian parents, complicated and almost contradictory strategies are used to reconcile cultural differences in parenting (Deepak, 2005). As previously mentioned, compared to White American culture, Asian Indian parents often exert stronger levels of parental control with their male compared to their female children. Stronger parental control may be a means in which parents attempt to reconcile intergenerational conflicts by not allowing their children to be exposed to American culture and friends. Females, however, may be exposed to stronger degrees of parental control since they are traditionally seen as the preservers and transmitters of culture. Indeed, Shams and Williams (1995) found Asian Indian adolescent females in Britain endorsed perceptions of higher parental control compared to their British counterparts. Furthermore, higher levels of perceived parental control were significantly related to higher levels of psychological distress.

In spite of these familial conflicts, inherent strengths exist within families, which provide support. Most adolescents in Segal's (1991) study reported an "unshakable confidence" that family ties were "stable and permanent" despite poor communication and parental control

(Segal, 1991). Studies from second-generation immigrants indicate an understanding that the individual has a place of belonging in the family and community and that there is a deep commitment to take care of one another. At the same time, collectivistic values may lead an individual to stifle the desires that contradict with family and cultural values, leading to potential personal conflicts (Dugsin, 2001).

Cultural Value Conflict

It is likely for an Asian Indian immigrant living in the United States to experience contention over Eastern and Western value systems. On one hand, Asian Indian immigrants may hear messages from school, peers, work, and media that encourage individualism and egalitarianism. They also hear contrasting messages from their families and the Asian Indian community, which stress family harmony, dependency, strict gender role expectations, and collectivistic values. This struggle of balancing two value systems may vary in intensity among Asian Indians, depending on generational status (Abouguendia & Noels, 2001; Inman, Constantine, Ladany, 1999). First-generation immigrants have experienced much of their socialization in India; therefore, they may feel less pressure to conform to Western values since Indian values have been internalized for them. They may find it easier to reconcile values from the host culture and culture of origin. Conversely, second-generation Asian Indian immigrants—individuals who were born in the United States or arrived to the United States at a young age—may have more difficulty finding a balance between two cultures. Being socialized or exposed to these opposite messages may lead to what Inman, Constantine, & Ladany (1999) termed cultural value conflict. Cultural value conflict can be defined as:

> an experience of negative affect (e.g. guilt, anxiety) and cognitive contradictions that result from contending simultaneously with the values and behavioral expectations that

> are internalized from the culture of origin (South Asian culture) and the values and behavioral expectations imposed on the person from the new culture (White American culture). (p.18)

This experience of reconciling two value systems is likely to produce even more strain in the acculturation process of Asian Indian immigrants.

Acculturation and Psychological Adjustment

Along with identifying acculturation patterns among Asian Indians, researchers have attempted to examine the relationship between acculturation and psychological adjustments for Asian Indian immigrants living in the United States. In a study of first-generation Asian Indian immigrants, Mehta (1998) investigated aspects of the acculturation process that were related to mental health. For instance, individuals with positive attitudes towards U.S culture and greater perceived acceptance by Americans reported better mental health, whereas individuals who perceived prejudice reported poorer psychological adjustment. Krishnan & Berry (1992) found marginalization and separation were associated with greater levels of acculturative distress among Asian Indian U.S. immigrants, while integration was linked with lower levels of stress. Comparable results were shown with second-generation Asian Indian U.S. immigrants, where higher perceived self-competence and grades were more prevalent among immigrants who adopted an integrated acculturation style (Farver, Bhadha, and Narang, 2002). Among Asian Indians, it appears that integration has been linked with better mental health, while marginalization has been associated with poorer mental health. Parallel findings have been shown in research with other immigrant groups (Castro, 2003).

The Present Study

The research that has been done to investigate the association of acculturation and mental health among Asian Indians has yielded useful findings. However, researchers conducted their studies using measures that place an emphasis on assessing for behavioral changes, such as language use and food and entertainment preferences. Measures that consider cultural values and beliefs have not been used to study acculturation and psychological functioning among Asian Indians. Castillo et al. (2004) found that a measure of acculturation that assessed discomfort with White American values and beliefs was a better predictor of perceived distress than a behavioral measure of acculturation among Mexican American female college students. For second-generation Asian Indian immigrant women, the experience of being socialized in two contrasting cultural value systems has been related to reports of greater cultural value conflicts (Inman et al., 2001). These findings support the importance of taking into account cultural values and beliefs in an immigrant group when studying mental health issues. Therefore, the present study was designed to examine how behavioral aspects of acculturation, discomfort with values of the host culture and culture of origin, cultural value conflict, and parental control relate to the psychological adjustment of Asian Indian women from Kerala who are immigrants to the United States.

Hypotheses

1. Second-generation immigrant women will report higher levels of cultural value conflicts than will first-generation immigrants.
2. Women who report a marginal style of behavioral acculturation (rejecting both host and culture of origin) will report higher cultural value conflict as well as lower levels

of psychological adjustment than will women who report a traditional, assimilation, or bicultural style of acculturation.

3. Women who report a bicultural style of behavioral acculturation (accepting both host and culture of origin) are hypothesized to report lower cultural value conflict and higher levels of psychological adjustment that will women who report a marginal, assimilation, or traditional acculturative style.
4. Women's degree of total acculturation will be significantly related to their reports of psychological adjustment.
5. Women who report higher discomfort with the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the host culture will report higher depressive symptoms and lower self-esteem.
6. Women's report of parental overprotection is expected to be a significant predictor of depressive symptoms and self-esteem.
7. Women's attitude towards the values and beliefs of the host culture is hypothesized to be a better predictor of psychological adjustment than are the behavioral aspects of acculturation.
8. Women's reports of cultural value conflict are predicted to mediate the relationship between their reports of behavioral acculturation and reported psychological adjustment.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

The present study included adult women of Keralite ancestry, who have or whose parents have immigrated to the United States. Participants were included if they were literate in English. The sample consisted of 73 Asian Indian women. Ages of the participants range from 18 to 63, with a mean age of 28. Participants' education levels were as follows: 12.3% who completed high school, 4.1% who have completed other vocational training, 32.9% who have completed some college training, 24.7% who have completed a Bachelor's degree, 9.6% who have completed some graduate work, and 15.1% who have completed a Master's degree. A majority of participants reported they are currently students (41.1%). Marital status of participants included 42 single women and 31 married women. In terms of household composition, 6.8% of the sample reported living alone, while 93.2% reported living with other persons, including husband or life partner (41.1%), parent(s) (52.1%), children (23.3%), sibling(s) (39.7%), and/or other persons (13.7%). Table 1 provides further socioeconomic background information including current occupational status, parents' levels of education, and occupational status of both parents.

A bimodal distribution was found for occupational status and for mother's occupational status. A large percentage of the sample are students, while another large percentage of the sample work in upper-middle class professions. A large proportion of participants reported that their mothers worked either in upper-middle class professions or in low-skilled jobs.

Participants were asked their current religious affiliation and self-perception of religiosity. All participants reported being affiliated with Christianity, and identified specific

denominations they belonged to including: Pentecostal (68.5%), Nondenominational (16.4%), Assemblies of God (5.5%), Marthomite (4.1%), Brethren (2.7%), and Orthodox (2.7%). About sixty-seven percent of participants reported they were "Very religious," 33.3% of participants reported they were "Somewhat religious," and none of the participants reported they were "Not very religious."

Forty-two women in the sample were first-generation immigrants (i.e., born outside of the United States) and 31 women were second-generation immigrants. Among first-generation immigrants, age of arrival to the United States extends from 1 to 33, with the mean arrival age of 13.6. The distribution for age of arrival to the United States was also bimodal. Bivariate scatterplots of the age of arrival with chronological age revealed that older participants arrived at a later age, while younger participants arrived at an early age. Only three participants arrived between the ages of 11-18. Of the first-generation immigrants, 32 were born in India, while 10 were born in Middle Eastern countries (i.e., Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait). A smaller percentage of women arrived to the United States as married women (21.4%) compared to those who arrived as single women (78.6%). For second-generation immigrants, fathers lived in the United States at an average of 27.8 years (*range* = 19-37) and mothers at an average of 27.9 years (*range* = 19-35). In addition, 81.9% of the sample are current citizens of the United States, 16.4% remain citizens of India, and 1.4% hold dual citizenship.

Participants identified their ethnicity as "Indian" (43.8%), "Asian American" (11%), "Indian American" (43.8%), and "Other" (1.4%). Participants believed their parents would identify themselves ethnically as "Indian" (78.1%), "Asian American" (2.7%), "Indian American" (17.8%), and "Other" (1.4%). In terms of cultural identification, 8.6% of participants

identified themselves as “Very Indian,” 18.6% as “More Indian than American,” 55.7% as “Bicultural,” 15.7% as “More American than Indian,” and 1.4% as “Very American.”

Measures

In addition to a demographic questionnaire, data for this study included the following five instruments presented to the participants in the following order: a modified version of the Acculturation Rating for Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II, Cuellar et al., 1995), the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1989), the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Short Depression Scale (CES-D-10, Radloff, 1977), the Cultural Values Conflict Scale (CVCS, Inman et al., 2001), and the Overprotection Scale of the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI, Parker, Tupling, and Brown, 1979). Furthermore, in order to obtain qualitative information regarding the rewards and challenges of being an Asian Indian woman in the United States, open-ended questions were included in the demographic questionnaire.

Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (Cuellar et al., 1995)

The Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican-Americans-II (ARSMA-II) was developed to measure level of acculturation for Mexican Americans. However, Farver, Narang, and Bhadha (2002), adapted the ARSMA-II to use with Asian Indians in their study. Since the items on the ARSMA-II are straightforward, they can be modified to use with Asian Indians by changing the term *Mexican* to *Malayalee* or *Asian Indian*.

The ARSMA-II consists of two parts: Part 1 and Part 2. Part 1 of the ARSMA-II consists of 30 self-report items. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale with scores ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely often*). Part 1 of the ARSMA-II measures cultural preferences for food, books, television, music, and friendships, along with assessing language use and ethnic identification. Part 1 is made up of two subscales: the Mexican Orientation Subscale (MOS),

which examines involvement in Mexican culture and the Anglo Orientation Scale (AOS), which examines involvement in Anglo culture. However, in this study the MOS wording was changed to make it the Malayalee Orientation Subscale, to examine involvement in Asian Indian culture. Higher scores on each represent an orientation towards Malayalee and Anglo culture. Among the standardization sample, the MOS and AOS subscales have been found to display coefficient alphas of .88 and .83, respectively. In the present study, the internal consistency of the ARSMA-II was good, with a Cronbach's alpha of .77. Specifically, the Anglo Orientation Subscale yielded an alpha of .81 and the Malayalee Orientation Subscale an alpha of .81.

Part 2 of the ARSMA-II consists of 12 self-report items, which are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale with scores ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely often). This subscale assesses an individual's difficulty with accepting ideas, values, attitudes, customs, and behaviors of the host culture and the culture of origin. The Marginality scale is divided into three subscales: the Anglo marginality subscale, the Mexican marginality subscale, and the Mexican-American marginality subscale. For the purposes of this study, the Anglo marginality subscale was used and the Mexican marginality subscale was changed to the Malayalee marginality subscale. In Cuellar et al.'s (1995) original study, the overall marginality scale was found to have good internal consistency (coefficient alpha = .87), the Anglo marginality scale was also found to have high internal consistency (coefficient alpha = .90), and the Mexican marginality subscale displayed lower internal consistency (coefficient alpha = .68). In the present study, the overall Marginality scale of the ARMSA-II was found to have an alpha of .86. Alphas of .91 and .88 were found for the Anglo Marginalization and Malayalee Marginalization subscales, respectively.

Currently, Farver et al. (2002) have been the only published researchers that have used the ARSMA-II with an Asian Indian population; however, they reported no data concerning psychometric properties or means of the ARSMA-II.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1989)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a widely-used ten-item self-report measure that assesses an individual's perceptions about their self-worth. Items are rated on a four-point Likert-type scale, with 1 being *Strongly Disagree* to 5 being *Strongly Agree.* Five negatively worded items are reversed scored, and then all items are summed to obtain the total score. Scores range from 10 to 40, with higher scores being indicative of higher self-esteem.

The Rosenberg was originally designed in 1962 to measure self-esteem in high school students (Rosenberg, 1989). Since then, much research has been done using the measure with college students and adults from varying ethnic backgrounds. The RSE has shown an internal consistency of .92, as well as .88 for test-retest reliability (Fisher & Corcoran, 1994). Furthermore, a great deal of research reviewed by Fisher & Corcoran has shown the RSE to have excellent concurrent, predictive, and construct validity. Iyer and Haslam (2003) used the RSE with first and second-generation South Asian U.S. immigrant women (89% of the sample was Asian Indian) and found a Cronbach's alpha of .89. In the present sample, a Cronbach's alpha of .90 was found.

The Center for Epidemiological Studies Short Depression Scale (Radloff, 1977)

The Center for Epidemiological Studies Short Depression Scale (CES-D-10) is a 10-item self-report scale that measures depressive symptoms over the past week. Items are rated on a 4-point Likert type scale (0 = *Rarely or none of the time*, 1 = *Some or little of the time*, 2 = *Occasionally*, and 3 = *All of the time*). The total score of the CES-D-10 is calculated by reversing

two positively worded items and then summing up the item scores. Higher scores on the CES-D-10 indicate greater severity of symptoms. The standard cut-off score is 10, out of a maximum of 30 points (Fischer & Corcoran, 1994).

The CES-D-10 (Radloff, 1977) is a shortened version of the CES-D, which is a 20-item scale that was originally designed to measure depressive symptomology in the general population. The CES-D is not a diagnostic tool, but when compared to clinical diagnoses of major depression, the sensitivity and specificity of the original CES-D was found to be about 80% and 70%, respectively (as reviewed in Fischer & Corcoran, 1994). Shrout and Yager (1989) demonstrated that the sensitivity and specificity of the measure remained fairly well intact even after reducing the items by half. Regarding psychometric properties, the CES-D-10 has shown good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$), as well as moderate test-retest reliability of .59 after a yearlong period (Fischer & Corcoran). Thus far, published research has not used the CES-D-10 with a sample of Asian Indian women. The present sample yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .82 for the CES-D-10.

Cultural Values Conflict Scale (Inman et al., 2001)

The Cultural Values Conflict Scale (CVCS) is a self-report instrument developed to measure "cultural values conflict for South Asian women as a function of their acculturative experience within a bicultural context" (Inman et al., 2001, p.2). The CVCS consists of 24 items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*, 6 = *not applicable*). Ratings marked "not applicable" are treated as missing values. Since items marked "not applicable" are treated as missing items on the CVCS, 44% of the present sample would have been excluded from the analyses if complete data were required. Therefore, a mean substitution was done for items marked "not applicable" to avoid biases due to

missing data. The CVCS is comprised of two subscales: Intimate Relations and Sex-Role Expectations.

Initial validation studies of the CVCS were done on a sample of 319 first and second-generation South Asian women, from the countries of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh (Inman et al., 2001). Furthermore, the age range of the women in the initial sample was 20-44. Internal consistency coefficients in the validation sample were found to be .84 for the total score, .87 for the Intimate Relations subscale, and .85 for the Sex Role Expectations subscale. In the current sample, Cronbach's alpha was found to be .74 for the entire scale, .66 for the Intimate Relations subscale, and .82 for the Sex Role Expectations subscale.

Discriminant validity was obtained by comparing group differences between first and second-generation South Asian women (Inman et al., 2001). Compared to first-generation women, second-generation women scored higher on the Sex-Role Expectations subscale, meaning they experienced greater dissonance with reconciling the ideas of South Asian and American culture within the area of gender role expectations. However, there were no significant differences between groups for the Intimate Relations subscale. In order to establish convergent validity, culture value conflict was correlated with constructs such as acculturative distress, intercultural competence concerns, and anxiety. Findings revealed that the Sex Role Expectations subscale was significantly correlated with measures of acculturative distress and anxiety.

The Parental Bonding Instrument (Parker, Tupling, and Brown, 1979)

The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) was originally developed by Parker et al. (1979) to measure an individual's perception of their parents' behaviors and attitudes along two primary dimensions: care and overprotection. Individuals are asked to rate behaviors and attitudes of each

parent, separately. For the purposes of the present study, only the Overprotection scale of the PBI was administered to participants.

According to Parker et al. (1979), the Overprotection scale of the PBI measures parental behaviors related to control, overprotection, intrusion, excessive contact, infantilization, and prevention and allowance of independent behavior. The scale is made up of 13 items that are rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale (0 = *very like*, 1 = *moderately like*, 2 = *moderately unlike*, and 3 = *very unlike*). Seven of the items are negatively worded and reverse scored; all items are then added to obtain a total score. The Overprotection scale yields a maximum score of 39, with higher scores meaning higher degree of parental control.

Three items were added to both the mother and father ratings to serve as buffers. These items include statements such as, "My mother/father sacrificed for the good of the family", "My mother/father wanted what was best for me", and "My mother/father worked hard for my family". Given the strong value and respect placed on parents in Asian Indian culture, these "buffering" items were included to give participants a chance to rate positive behaviors of their parents. These items were not included in the scale scores.

The initial validation sample of the PBI included individuals from the general population; however, the authors did not mention the ethnic composition of the sample (Parker et al., 1979). In that sample, the Overprotection scale displayed test-retest reliability of .63 over three weeks, .74 split-half reliability, and .48-.51 concurrent validity. Women in the validation sample reported a mean total score of 12.9 for maternal overprotection and 12.7 for paternal overprotection. For the present study, a total mean score of 17.6 was obtained for the maternal control subscale and a mean of 17.5 was obtained for the paternal control subscale.

One other study has used the PBI with Asian Indian populations. Shams and Williams (1995) used the PBI with British Asian Indian immigrant adolescents and reported an alpha of .76 for the Overprotection scale and a mean total score of 17.4 for the girls in the sample. In the current sample, the total Overprotection scale, maternal control subscale, and paternal control subscale yielded a Cronbach's alphas of .74, .59, and .66, respectively.

Demographic Questionnaire

Participants completed a demographic questionnaire, which consisted of questions about their age, marital status, household composition, birth country, the state of India both parents were born in, ethnic identification, parental ethnic identification, citizenship status, educational level, parents' educational level, occupation, parents' occupation, current and childhood religious affiliation, and religiosity. Also, some questions specifically applied to first generation immigrants, such as what state in India they were born in, age of entry to the United States, and marital statues at entry to the United States. Second-generation immigrants were asked to report the number of years each parent has been residing in the United States.

The demographic questionnaire also contained seven open-ended questions regarding family conflicts and life in the United States. These questions included the respondent's greatest reward and challenge of living in the United States, what they like and dislike about the United States, conflicts with parents and/or children, and how they decided to identify themselves culturally.

Procedure

Since Christianity is a major religion of Kerala, participants for this study were recruited from Keralite churches and annual conventions located in the Southwestern region of the United States. Participants were also solicited through the method of snowball sampling (i.e. asking

initial participants to recommend others who fit the inclusion criteria of the study). Through the use of a cover letter, all participants were informed that the study was examining adaptation to life in the United States for Asian Indian women. Furthermore, the cover letter explained the voluntary and anonymous nature of the study, along with a statement explaining that completion of the questionnaire packet would reflect consent to participate. Questionnaire packets consisted of the cover letter, the demographic form, the ARSMA-II, the CVCS, the Rosenberg, the CES-D, and the PBI. For their participation, participants were given the choice to enter a raffle for $75.00. If participants wished to enter the raffle, they were asked to write their name and contact information on a separate slip of paper attached to the survey packet. Once the raffle winner was announced and paid, the slips of paper were shredded.

Data Analysis Plan

Descriptive analyses were computed to check the normality of the distributions and to find the mean, standard deviation, and observed minimum and maximum values of each scalar variable. Frequencies were also obtained for relevant demographic variables. Additionally, to compare the distributions of categorical demographic variables such as marital status, religious affiliation, birth country, generational status, and marital status when arriving to the United States, separate chi-square analyses were computed. Independent sample t-tests were calculated to examine differences among groups based on marital status, marital status when arriving to the United States, and generational status. Cohen's *d* was computed to determine the meaningfulness of observed significant differences. Effect sizes were small if Cohen's *d* was under .20, medium if between .50-.79, and high if above .80 (Cohen, 1992). Bivariate correlations were also computed to study the relationships between scalar demographic, independent, and dependent

variables. Correlation coefficients of .10, .30, and .50, irrespective of sign, were interpreted as having small, medium, and large coefficients, respectively (Cohen, 1992).

In order to test Hypothesis 1, an independent sample t-test was calculated using generational status as the grouping variable and the total CVCS score as the dependent variable. Hypotheses 2 and 3 were tested by first grouping the sample into the four acculturation styles based on Berry's (1980) model. Independent sample t-tests were used to identify group differences in the psychological adjustment variables based on acculturative styles. This test is equivalent to a planned comparison in an oneway F between groups. Hypotheses 4 and 5 were tested by running bivariate correlations on total scores of Part 1 and Part 2 of the ARSMA-II and the psychological adjustment variables.

Hypothesis 6 was tested using separate hierarchical multiple regression analyses in which maternal and paternal control were used as independent variables and the Rosenberg and the CES-D-10 were used as the dependent variables, respectively. Hierarchical multiple regression—entering variables in a predetermined order—was done due to its theoretical basis (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). As mentioned earlier, females in Asian Indian culture are viewed as the transmitters of culture. It is probable that mothers may exert more control over their daughters compared to fathers. Therefore, paternal control was entered first in the regression equation, followed by maternal control.

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were also used to test Hypothesis 7, using the Rosenberg and CES-D-10 as dependent variables and Anglo marginalization and behavioral acculturation as independent variables. Previous research with Mexican-American women reveals cultural beliefs and attitudes may be a better indicator of psychological adjustment than cultural behaviors. Thus, degree of acculturation was entered first in the regression equation,

followed by Anglo marginalization. The mediator model predicted in Hypothesis 8 was tested using hierarchical multiple regressions and techniques suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986).

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Descriptive Analyses

Means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis, and observed minimum/maximum values were calculated for each demographic, independent, and dependent variable (See Table 2). Tests of normality using skewness, kurtosis, and histograms revealed a normal distribution for most variables. The exceptions involved demographics, as discussed in the participants section. Separate chi-square distributions were computed for marital status, religious affiliation, birth country, generational status, and marital status when arriving to the United States in order to describe the distribution of nominal demographic variables. Frequencies for these variables can be found in Table 1. For the variables marital status and religious affiliation, categories were collapsed due to low frequencies. Specifically, since no participants reported cohabiting or being divorced, separated, or widowed, only married and single participants were present in the analysis. For religious affiliation, categories were recoded depending on similar doctrinal beliefs. Individuals who identified their denominations as "Pentecostal" or "Assemblies of God" were placed in one category ($n = 54$), participants who were "Marthomite," "Orthodox," and "Brethren" were placed in a separate category ($n = 7$), and participants who were "Nondenominational" were placed in another category ($n = 12$). Expected values were those that made each category equal. Significant differences from the expected were found for the following variables: religious affiliation, χ^2 (2, $N = 73$) = 32.89, $p < .000$, marital status when arriving to the United States, χ^2 (1, $N = 72$) = 14.25, $p < .001$, and birth country (i.e., United States, India, or Other) χ^2 (2, $N = 73$) = 12.69, $p < .002$.

A positive skew was indicated for Part 1 of the ARSMA-II, with the average score for Part 1 being .31 (*SD* = .92). The Anglo orientation subscale (AOS) had a mean of 3.80 (*SD* = .56), while the Malayalee orientation subscale (MOS) had a mean of 3.50 (*SD* = .57). Cuellar et al. (1995) provided a classification of acculturation levels based on the linear continuum of acculturation scores. Based on these classifications, 4% of the current sample was identified as very Malayalee, 33% as Malayalee-oriented to balanced bicultural, 47% as slightly Anglo oriented to bicultural, and 16% as strongly Anglo oriented.

In order to determine acculturation styles based on Berry's (1980) model of acculturation, the medians of the AOS (*Mdn* = 3.85) and MOS (*Mdn* = 3.47) were used to form acculturation styles. Following Berry's (1980) model, participants were classified as separate (AOS < 3.85 and MOS > 3.47), marginalized (AOS < 3.85) and MOS ≤ 3.47), bicultural (AOS ≥ 3.85 and MOS > 3.47), and assimilated (AOS ≥ 3.85 and MOS ≤ 3.47). Twenty-five participants were classified as separate, 14 as marginalized, 14 as bicultural, and 20 as assimilated.

For Part 2 of the ARSMA-II, the Anglo marginality subscale (AMS) had a mean score of 17.01 (*SD* = 5.52) and the Malayalee marginality subscale (MMS) had a mean of 18.40 (*SD* = 5.10). Similar classifications used in Part 1 of the ARSMA-II were determined for Part 2 using the medians of the AMS (*Mdn* = 17) and the MMS (*Mdn* = 17). Twenty-six participants were classified as marginalized from both cultures (AMS > 17 and MMS ≥ 17), 22 marginalized from Malayalee culture (AMS ≤ 17 and MMS ≥ 17), 8 marginalized from Anglo culture (AMS > 17 and MMS <17), and 22 marginalized from neither culture (AMS ≤ 17 and MMS < 17).

Participants reported a mean score of 20.2 (*SD* = 6.2) for the Rosenberg and a mean of 9.2 (*SD* = 5.6) for the CESD-10. The CVCS had a mean score of 82.2 (*SD* = 10.9). Means and standard deviations for the subscales of the CVCS include 45.3 (*SD* = 6.4) for the Intimate

Relations subscale and 37.1 (*SD* = 8.4) for the Sex Role Expectation subscale. For the PBI, the mean score for the total scale was 35.6 (*SD = 9.5*), the mean for the maternal control subscale was 17.75 (*SD= 5.55*), and the mean for the paternal control subscale was 17.52 (*SD = 5.76*).

Associations among Demographic Variables

Differences among Demographic Groups

Independent sample t-tests were calculated to reveal whether marital status and generational status were related to acculturation variables, independent, and dependent variables. Findings are presented in Table 3 and Table 4. Tests revealed significant differences based on marital status for Anglo orientation, Malayalee marginalization, and cultural value conflict. Specifically, compared to married participants, single participants reported more Anglo orientation, Malayalee marginalization, and cultural value conflict. The observed differences yielded moderate effect sizes, ranging from .51 to .67. Differences based on generational status were also observed. In comparison to first-generation immigrants, second-generation immigrants reported higher Anglo orientation and overall acculturation. Effect sizes for these calculations were -.87 and -.97, respectively. On the other hand, first-generation immigrants reported higher Malayalee orientation.

Correlations

A series of correlations was calculated using Pearson's *r* to determine the relations among continuous demographic variables. These correlations are found in Table 5. Following Cohen's (1992) guidelines, effect sizes were taken into account to determine the practical significance of correlations.

Older women were more educated and held higher occupational statuses compared to their younger counterparts. Older women were also more likely to have parents who were less

educated and mothers who had lower occupational statuses than the younger women of the sample. Bivariate analyses were also done to examine patterns among variables related to socioeconomic status. For example, more educated women were found to have higher occupational status. Moderate correlations were found between parent's educational level and their parents' occupational status. Furthermore, a moderate correlation was found between mother and father's occupation.

For first generation women, age of arrival to the United States was highly correlated with chronological age and moderately related to education level and current occupation. Negative correlations were also found between arrival age and parent's education level and mother's occupation. Among second-generation immigrants, the number of years mother and father lived in the United States were found to be highly correlated with one another and with chronological age. The number of years father lived in the United States was moderately related to her education level.

Bivariate Analyses

Correlations between Demographic Variables and Independent Variables

A series of correlations was calculated to determine the relationships between demographic and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are depicted in Table 6.

Several demographic variables were related to acculturation, Anglo-orientation, and Malayalee-orientation. Older women reported low Anglo-orientation and degree of acculturation; these effect sizes were moderate. Parental education appeared to be positively and moderately related to Anglo-orientation. Similarly, parents' education level was also positively related to higher levels of acculturation and lower levels of Malayalee-orientation. Both of these relationships proved to have high effect sizes. Mother's occupational status was found to have

high, positive associations between Anglo-orientation and acculturation, while being negatively related to Malayalee-orientation. Father's occupational status was positively related to acculturation level and negatively related to Malayalee orientation. Effect sizes for these relationships were low and moderate, respectively. Additionally, first generation immigrants who arrived to the United States at an older age were much more likely to be less acculturated and more likely to be oriented to Malayalee culture.

Paternal control was found to be positively associated with education level and mother's occupation. Effect sizes for these associations were correspondingly low and moderate. Regarding maternal control, older women tended to report less maternal overprotection.

Associations between Demographics and Dependent Variables

A series of correlations was calculated to determine relationships between demographic variables and dependent variables. Few demographic variables were found to be correlated with the dependent variables. However, older and more educated women reported higher self-esteem than younger and less educated women in the sample. Older women also reported fewer cultural value conflicts than younger women did. These associations were found to have moderate and low practical significance. Independent sample t-tests revealed married women reported higher self-esteem than single participants did. Moreover, second-generation women reported higher depressive symptoms than first-generation immigrants. These differences yielded moderate practical significance.

Correlations among Independent Variables

In order to determine whether the independent variables were related, a series of correlations was computed. Significant correlations ranged from -.34 to .50. Subscales of measures were found to be highly correlated with each other and the overall score. For instance,

the Anglo-orientation and Malayalee orientation subscales were highly related to acculturation, with the Malayalee orientation subscale being negatively related to acculturation and the Anglo orientation subscale being positively related to acculturation. In addition, a high, positive correlation was found to exist between the maternal and paternal control subscales. Additional findings indicated women high on Anglo orientation also reported higher levels of Malayalee marginalization. Moreover, Malayalee marginalization was also positively related to maternal control. Both of these correlations yielded low effect sizes.

Correlations among Dependent Variables

In order to determine whether dependent variables were related, a series of correlations was computed. As Table 7 indicates, moderate correlations were found among the dependent variables of self-esteem, depressive symptoms, and cultural value conflict. Significant correlation coefficients ranged from -.41 to .46. Self-esteem was negatively related to depressive symptoms and cultural value conflict, while a positive relationship was found between depressive symptoms and cultural value conflict.

Correlations among Independent Variables and Dependent Variables

Correlations were conducted to examine the unhypothesized relationships between independent and dependent variables. Correlation coefficients are depicted in Table 7. As indicated by the table, moderate effect size associations were found to exist among the variables. Specifically, depression was positively correlated with Malayalee marginalization. Self-esteem was negatively related to maternal control and Malayalee marginalization. Additionally, positive correlations were observed for cultural value conflict with acculturation, Anglo orientation, Malayalee marginalization, and maternal control.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1

Second-generation immigrant women will report higher levels of cultural value conflicts than first-generation women will. An independent sample t-test provided support for this hypothesis, t (71) = -3.50, $p < .00$. Second-generation women (M = 87.03, SD = 9.66) reported experiences of higher cultural value conflicts than first-generation women (M = 78.62, SD = 10.54). To determine effect size, Cohen's d was calculated, revealing a high effect size of -.83.

Hypothesis 2

Women who report a marginal style of behavioral acculturation (as measured by Part 1 of the ARSMA-II) will report higher cultural value conflicts as well as lower levels of psychological adjustment than will women who report a traditional, assimilation, and bicultural style of acculturation. Descriptive analyses were initially done to compare the means of the cultural value conflict, self-esteem, and depressive symptoms scores of each acculturative style (traditional, marginalized, bicultural, and assimilated). Initial comparisons to traditional, bicultural, and assimilated groups revealed that marginalized individuals reported the highest self-esteem and lowest symptoms of depression. Marginalized individuals also reported lower, but not significant, cultural value conflicts compared to bicultural and assimilated individuals. Planned comparison t-tests were calculated to compare marginalized individuals to the rest of the sample and significant differences in the opposite direction from the hypothesis were found for self-esteem, t (71) = -2.17, p = .03 and depression, t (71) = 2.04, p = .04. Marginalized individuals (M = 23.36, SD = 6.58) reported significantly higher self-esteem than individuals who were not marginalized (M = 19.46, SD = 5.91). Marginalized individuals also endorsed

fewer depressive symptoms (M = 6.50, SD = 5.14) than individuals who were not classified as marginalized (M = 9.85, SD = 5.59). Medium effect sizes were obtained for both analyses. Therefore, results of these t-tests do not provide support for the stated hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3

Women who report a bicultural style of behavioral acculturation (as measured by Part 1 of the ARSMA-II) will report lower cultural value conflicts and higher levels of psychological adjustment than women who report a traditional, assimilation, or marginalized acculturative style. Descriptive analyses comparing the means of the cultural value conflict, self-esteem, and depressive symptom scores of each acculturative style revealed that bicultural individuals did not report the highest level of psychological adjustment as predicted. Planned comparison t-tests did not reveal significant differences for bicultural individuals compared to the rest of the sample for self-esteem, t (71) = 1.70, p = *ns* or depressive symptoms, t (71) = -.59, p = *ns*.

Hypothesis 4

A significant relationship is predicted to exist between degree of total acculturation and psychological adjustment. Two-tailed bivariate correlations did not provide support for this hypothesis. The total acculturation score was not found to be significantly related to self-esteem (r = -.09, p = *ns*) or depression (r = .11, p = ns).

Hypothesis 5

A significant, positive relationship is predicted to exist between discomfort with values of the host culture and psychological adjustment. One-tailed bivariate correlations did not provide support for this hypothesis. Anglo marginalization scores were not significantly related to self-esteem (r = -.03, p = *ns*) or to depressive symptoms (r = .07, p = *ns*).

Hypothesis 6

Parental overprotection is expected to be a significant predictor of psychological adjustment. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were used to test this hypothesis. In the first equation, self-esteem was the dependent variable. Previous bivariate and t-test analyses reveal age, education, and marital status are significant related to the outcome variable self-esteem. Therefore, these variables were used as controls. The marital status variable was dummy coded by assigning new values (0 = single, 1 = married). Age, education, and marital status were entered in Step 1, followed by paternal control in Step 2, and maternal control was entered in Step 3. As depicted in Table 7, the overall model proved to be significant, F (5, 66) = 3.19, $p <$ .01 and accounted for 14% of the variance. Paternal control did not add significant unique variance; however, maternal control proved to be a significant predictor of self-esteem (β = -.30, $p <$ .01) even after controlling for age, education, and marital status. Hierarchical regression analysis did not provide support for paternal or maternal control being significant predictors of depression.

Hypothesis 7

Attitudes towards the values and beliefs of the host culture will be a better predictor of psychological adjustment than behavioral acculturation will. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were used to test this hypothesis. In the first equation, self-esteem was the dependent variable. Previous bivariate and t-test analyses reveal age and marital status are significant related to the outcome variable self-esteem. Therefore, these variables were used as controls. The marital status variable was dummy coded by assigning new values (0 = single, 1 = married). Age and marital status were entered in Step 1, followed by the Anglo-orientation score in Step 2, and Anglo marginalization in Step 3. None of the predictors in this model maintained significance.

The second regression equation used depressive symptoms as the dependent variable. Since t-tests reveal generational differences in psychological adjustment, this variable was used in the regression analyses as a control. The generation status variable was dummy coded by assigning new values (0 = first generation; 1 = second generation). Generational status was entered in Step 1, followed by Anglo orientation in Step 2, and Anglo marginalization in Step 3. Generational status proved to be a significant predictor of depressive symptoms; however, Anglo orientation and Anglo marginalization did not add significant unique variance. Therefore, no support was found for Anglo marginalization being a better predictor of psychological adjustment than behavioral acculturation.

Hypothesis 8.

Cultural value conflict will mediate the relationship between behavioral acculturation and psychological adjustment. Techniques suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) were applied to test the hypothesized mediation model. Examination of correlation matrices indicate cultural value conflict is significantly related to self-esteem (r = -.41, p = .00), depression (r = .47, p = .00), and Anglo orientation (r =.22, p < .05). Moreover, Anglo orientation is significantly correlated with cultural value conflict (r =.-42, p <.00) and depression (r = .24, p < .05) but not related to self-esteem (r = -19, p = *ns*). Since the initial criteria suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) for mediation were met for the variables cultural value conflict, depression, and Anglo orientation, this mediator model was further explored. Regression analyses were used to test the mediator model and findings are depicted in Table 8. Anglo orientation was found to affect cultural value conflict in the first equation and Anglo orientation was found to affect depression in the second equation. In the third equation, regression results indicate that when Anglo orientation and cultural value conflict were entered together to predict depression, only cultural

value conflict accounts for a significant portion of the variance (β = .09, $p = ns$ and β = .44, $p <$ .00, respectively). This indicates cultural value conflict indeed mediates the relationship between Anglo orientation and depressive symptoms.

Exploratory Analyses

Exploratory hierarchical regression models were tested to find acculturation variables that were possible predictors of psychological adjustment. Since hypotheses testing revealed Anglo marginalization was a poor predictor of psychological adjustment, a hierarchical regression model was tested to examine the role of Malayalee marginalization in predicting depressive symptoms. In order to control for generational status, the dummy coded generational status variable was entered in Step 1, total acculturation was entered in Step 2, and Malayalee marginalization in Step 3. As indicated in Table 9, the overall model proved to be significant, F (3, 69) = 7.48, p = .00 and accounted for 21% of the variance. Generational status (β = .28, $p <$ .05) and Malayalee marginalization (β = .37, p = .00) each accounted for 6% and 12% of unique variance, respectively. Total acculturation, as measured by behavioral changes on the ARSMA-II, did not prove to be a significant predictor of depressive symptoms.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Seven open-ended questions were included in the demographic questionnaire asking participants about their adaptation to life in the United States. The researcher transcribed all answers obtained to each question. Responses for each question were examined to search for themes, and then placed in appropriate categories. Volunteer graduate student scorers independently reviewed categories to determine if each response was placed in the appropriate category. Responses were entered into SPSS, with a rating of 1 for “present” and 0 for “absent”.

All answers given by participants were coded. Often, participants' answers reflected more than one theme. In these cases, more than one answer per person was coded.

Question 1

The first question asked participants to describe what about themselves they consider when determining how they identify themselves ethnically. Four major themes were identified from the participants' responses.

The first theme identified was rewards based on behavioral or external aspects, such as an individual's behavior, relationships, and appearance. For instance, of the sixty-one participants that answered this question, forty responses included those that described specific cultural characteristics such as food, clothing, music, language, and traditions. Sixteen responses included those that considered interpersonal relationships and fifteen responses pointed to those that considered lifestyle and mannerisms.

The second theme that emerged was participants who identified themselves ethnically by internal or intrinsic aspects of themselves. Responses in this category include those that touch on value systems, personality, and attitudes. Twenty-six answers were obtained that mentioned values, morals, and personal beliefs. Eight responses include those that consider attitudes and perspective, while four responses mentioned personality.

The next theme that emerged was participants who considered their upbringing and environment. A total of thirteen responses fell in this category and they include participants who considered where they born, the way in which they were raised, and the country they preferred to be in. Responses that were not endorsed by at least 10% of the sample fell into the final category of "other". These responses include participants who made broad statements referring to culture and participants who considered the process and outcome of acculturation.

Question 2

The second open-ended question was "What has been your greatest reward from being of Indian descent living in the United States?" Five broad themes were identified for this question including: Indian culture, opportunity and freedom, moral values and beliefs, learning experiences, and having the best of both worlds. Forty-three responses mentioned aspects of Indian culture such as family connectedness, strong community ties, clothing, food, and language. Answers that referred to pride in Indian culture, ethnicity, and heritage were also placed in this category. Freedom and opportunity were recognized as the second major theme for this question. Twenty-five responses acknowledged the increased opportunities and freedom available in the United States. Another main theme for this question was participants' mention of moral beliefs. According to fifteen responses, participants felt their moral values were rewarding.

Learning and growth experiences also appeared as a theme for this question. Twelve responses mentioned awareness and sensitivity to diversity, broader perspectives, and greater open-mindedness as positive results of being of Indian descent in the U.S. The final category was recognized as having the best of both worlds. Seven responses indicated being of Indian descent in the United States meant participants had the opportunity to pick and apply the best of both cultures.

Question 3

The third question participants were asked was "What has been the greatest challenge being of Indian descent in the United States?" Key themes in this category include challenges related to culture, social systems, and prejudice. Twenty-eight responses include cultural challenges such as the cultural differences in the values systems of Indian and American culture. Responses in this category also consist of those stating the difficulties in either accepting or

integrating aspects of both cultures. Twenty-five responses fell under the theme of challenges in social relationships. Main points of the social relationships category include responses related to challenges in relationships, such as conflict within families, intergenerational cultural gaps between children and elders, and fitting in to both cultures. The category of perceived prejudice from mainstream society appeared to be third largest category, with a total of thirteen responses. Responses that were endorsed by less than 10% of the sample were placed in the "other" category. These included answers that identified language barriers, lifestyle of U.S., schooling, and religion as primary challenges of being of Asian Indian descent.

Question 4

Participants were asked to complete the following incomplete sentence: "I like the United States because…" Opportunities for improvement and freedom were identified as prominent themes for this category, with forty-four and thirty-three responses in each respective category. Eight responses indicated the enjoyment of the standard and comfort of living that the U.S. offered. Responses that were endorsed by less than 10% of the sample were placed in the "other" category. Responses in this category include participants who mentioned they liked the U.S. was a Christian country, a diverse country, and an open-minded country. Other participants reported they liked the food and the sense of belonging.

Question 5

Participants were also asked to complete the following sentence: "I don't like the United States because…" The following categories were considered as the five central themes to this question: moral values, perceived prejudice, religious decline, misuse of freedom, and U.S. lifestyle. Twenty-two responses indicated a dislike for the perceived absence of morality in U.S. culture. Sixteen responses mentioned the dislike for perceived prejudice and discrimination

experienced living in the United States. Nine responses were from participants who felt freedom was being abused in the United States or that there was "too much" freedom in the U.S. Furthermore, eight responses mentioned the dislike for the complexity of the American lifestyle. The category of religious decline included seven answers that described a decline in Christianity. An "other" category was created for low frequency responses; answers in this category included a dislike for the process of adaptation and a dislike for the Electoral College.

Question 6

To better understand family dynamics, participants were asked to complete the following sentence: "My parents and I have conflicts about…" Four primary themes were identified for this question including, conflicts around independence and autonomy, marriage and dating, appearance, and cultural issues. Thirty-two responses from participants were related to the theme of independence and autonomy. Participants reported conflict over parents' overprotection and control and with respect to decision-making. Marriage and dating also emerged as a significant theme, with twenty-three responses. Participant responses in this category highlighted conflicts with arranged marriage, intercultural marriage, and dating. Twelve responses to this question were related to appearance. Participants who mentioned conflict with parents regarding clothing, jewelry, make-up, or hairstyle fell into this category. Ten responses fell under the category of cultural issues. Participants' answers in this category mentioned conflict with parents regarding cultural differences and issues. Either one participant or few participants endorsed responses in this category. Therefore, a final category of "Typical Adolescent Maturation Conflicts" was created for responses that mentioned broad areas of conflict (i.e., school, work, money, learning responsibility, religion, and friends).

Question 7

The final question was also in a sentence completion format. Participants were asked to complete the following sentence: "My children and I have conflicts about…" Compared to previous questions, the response rate for this question was low (14 responses). This may be due to mothers who have young children, with whom they have not had significant conflicts, or older mothers in the sample who may have been reluctant to report family conflict due to cultural reasons. Two themes emerged from the responses given. These include conflicts related to culture and general conflicts. Four responses indicated conflicts with children regarding cultural differences. The remainder of the responses was each endorsed by one participant and described fairly broad areas related to developmentally appropriate parent-child conflicts (i.e., school, time management, and obedience).

Correlations among Categories and Variables

Point biserial correlations were computed between the theme ratings and the major study variables such as acculturation, parental control, cultural value conflict, and adjustment. The intercorrelations between categories and scalar variables were slight to moderate (r = .25-.36).

Women who reported Indian culture was a reward for them also seemed to report higher paternal control (r = .27). Furthermore, women who reported having the "best of both worlds" rewarding were less oriented towards Malayalee culture (r = -.25). A negative association was also found between Anglo-orientation and participants who found the opportunities and rewards of the United States to be rewarding (r = -.30).

Women who enjoyed the comfort and standard of living of the United States reported fewer depressive symptoms (r = -.25). On the other hand, women who disliked the experience of prejudice and discrimination reported greater depressive symptoms (r = .31). Additionally,

women who disliked the religious decline of the United States reported fewer depressive symptoms (r = -.30) and higher self-esteem (r = .26).

Regarding parent-child conflict, participants who were more oriented towards Anglo culture (r = .36) and less oriented towards Malayalee culture (r = -.29) were more likely to report conflict with parents about marriage and dating. Conflict with parents regarding marriage and dating was greater among second-generation immigrants (r = .48), even after controlling for age. Conflict with parents involving cultural issues appeared to be related to the Sex Role Expectation subscale of the CVCS (r = .28). General conflict with parents was found to be positively associated with Malayalee marginalization (r = .27).

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between acculturation, parental overprotection, and psychological adjustment among first and second-generation immigrant women from Kerala, India. Results provided support for three of the eight main hypotheses; the remaining hypotheses were inconclusive. Perhaps the most pertinent findings came from exploratory analyses, which revealed the impact of attitude marginalization towards culture of origin, rather than host culture, on mental adjustment. Qualitative data also provided a better awareness of participants' acculturative experiences. Overall, the study has brought a clearer understanding of an overlooked immigrant population, while simultaneously raising directions for future research.

Acculturation styles based on Berry's (1980) model of acculturation were used to identify adaptation styles within the present sample. A majority of the participants were classified as separate or traditional (n = 25), while twenty were classified as assimilated. Fourteen participants fell under the category of integration or bicultural, and the remaining fourteen were identified as marginalized. First-generation immigrants displayed a stronger behavioral orientation towards Kerala culture, while second-generation immigrants showed a greater orientation towards Anglo American culture. Previous studies with the Asian Indian population indicate integration to be a prevalent pattern of acculturation between first and second-generation immigrants (Abouguendia & Noels, 2001; Krishnan & Berry, 1992). However, Farver et al. (2002) found second-generation immigrants were more likely to adopt a style of assimilation than the first generation. These findings seem to reflect the acculturation patterns of the existing sample. It is important to note that when participants in this study were asked to identify themselves culturally, half the

participants classified themselves as “Bicultural”. Limitations with Part 1 of the ARSMA-II may be a possible explanation as to why a small number of participants was categorized as bicultural.

Additional findings regarding the relation of acculturative style and psychological adjustment proved to disconfirm hypotheses and contradict the literature on immigrant mental health. It has been well established that a bicultural style of acculturation is linked to better psychological health and marginalized individuals generally are less psychologically adjusted (Castro, 2003). However, findings of the present study indicated individuals who were classified as marginalized reported the highest levels of self-esteem and lower depressive symptoms, rather than individuals who were classified as bicultural. Effect sizes revealed small practical significance for depressive symptoms and a medium effect size for self-esteem. Possible explanations for these findings may be due to the trouble associated with dichotomizing a quantitative variable and the low and unequal number of participants who were categorized in each group. Furthermore, it is also possible that individuals who are marginalized do not report a strong orientation to either their home or the host culture. Therefore, it is feasible that this may lead to fewer cultural value conflicts.

One objective of the study was to identify generational differences that exist among the Malayalee immigrant population. Results supported the hypothesis that second-generation women reported higher levels of cultural value conflict. Previous studies on cultural value conflict among South Asian women also support this finding (Inman et al., 2001). It appears the cognitive dissonance and negative affect associated with reconciling two contrasting cultural value systems are more prominent in second-generation women. A possible explanation for this pattern of findings may be that first-generation immigrants were socialized predominately in Indian culture; as a result, Indian values have been deeply internalized for them. In contrast,

second-generation immigrants are exposed and socialized in two contrasting cultural value systems. Consequently, second generation immigrants may experience greater struggles in finding balance and internalizing two cultural value systems.

More clinically significant results revealed second-generation immigrant women in the sample reported lower self-esteem and higher symptoms of depression compared to their counterparts. A large-scale study conducted by the National Research Council with immigrant youth and children of immigrants seems to provide support that subsequent immigrant generations (i.e., 2nd generation and beyond) show poorer psychological health than first-generation immigrants do (Hernandez and Charney, 1998). Suárez-Orozco and Doucet (2006) theorize that challenges faced by the immigrating generation and their succeeding counterparts are vastly different. For instance, second-generation immigrants may be faced with the challenge of gaining a sense of identity (Suarez-Orozco & Doucet) and struggle with cultural value conflicts, as the current results suggest. First-generation immigrants are primarily concerned with learning, adapting, and surviving in a new cultural context. However, first-generation immigrants also carry with them several protective factors such as hardiness and a dual frame of reference (Suarez-Orozco & Doucet). Voluntarily immigrating to a new country demands one to have adequate internal resources. First-generation immigrants may be a unique population to be compared to since they may inherently have greater internal resources and resiliency. Additionally, first-generation immigrants also have the advantage of having a dual frame of reference. For example, if their present situation is relatively positive to the one they left behind, this may provide them with optimism and hope.

A hypothesized relationship between acculturation and psychological adjustment proved to be partially supported. Results revealed participants who were more behaviorally oriented

towards Anglo American culture reported greater depressive symptoms. Upon further examination, cultural value conflict related to sex role expectation was found to mediate the relationship between Anglo orientation and depressive symptomology. It is likely that cultural value conflict regarding sex role expectation may result from greater exposure and preference for the dominant culture. Cultural value conflict in turn may cause one to feel distressed. Qualitative work with Asian Indian women done by Inman et al. (1999) reveal that the women in her sample reportedly experienced feelings of depression as a result of attempts to negotiate pressures from both cultures.

It was hypothesized that discomfort with attitudes, ideas, and values of Anglo culture would be a significant predictor of psychological adjustment, as well as a better predictor of functioning than behavioral acculturation (Castillo et al., 2004). Findings did not provide support for this hypothesis. Interestingly, exploratory analyses revealed that discomfort with attitudes, ideas, and values of Malayalee culture played a significant role in predicting depressive symptoms. In addition, Malayalee attitude marginalization was also related to greater cultural value conflict and lower self-esteem. Anglo attitude marginalization did not appear to play a role in adjustment for the present sample. The impact of attitudes towards Asian Indian culture on adjustment has not been previously established with Asian Indian immigrants. Findings from the current study appear to be related to research on a new construct termed "intragroup marginalization" (Olds, Chen, Cano, Blucker, & Castillo, 2006). Intragroup marginalization refers to members of one's own cultural group distancing themselves from an individual who adopts characteristics of the dominant culture (Olds et al.). Although attitude marginalization and intragroup marginalization are separate constructs, evidence from both suggests one's heritage culture can be a significant source of stress.

As formerly mentioned, the role of family in Asian Indian culture is vital. Hence, family dynamics were also included in the present study. Parental overprotection was chosen for its saliency in Asian Indian families and due to its link to psychological functioning. Partial support was provided for the hypothesis that parental control would be a significant predictor of psychological adjustment. Specifically, paternal control did not seem to play a noteworthy role in adjustment for women in the sample. Rather, high maternal control was a significant predictor of low self-esteem for Malayalee women. The current findings appear to be similar to previous research which has found high parental control has been associated with low perceptions of ability (Pomerantz, 2000) and negative self-esteem (Salamah, 1991). For Malayalee women specifically, maternal control appears to have a unique effect on self-esteem. Mothers may exert higher levels of control over their daughters than their sons since Asian Indian women are traditionally seen as the transmitters of culture.

The current study included qualitative findings, which provides additional information in understanding the adaptation to life in the United States for immigrant women from Kerala. Relevant challenges for these women include differences in the value systems of Indian and American culture. Challenges in social systems were also experienced, particularly with intergenerational familial conflicts and difficulties fitting in to the dominant culture. Participants also acknowledged the experience of prejudice to be a challenge while living in the U.S. When asked to consider the aspects they disliked about the United States, responses related to discrimination and misuses of freedom were prevalent. However, a prominent theme that surfaced included a dislike for the perceived decline in religion and moral values. This theme may be related to the fact that all participants of the sample identified themselves as being “Very Religious” or “Somewhat Religious”. Therefore, this may be a more conservative sample.

Questions regarding family dynamics revealed conflicts around independence and autonomy seem to be particularly salient for participants. Moreover, women reportedly also experience conflict with parents regarding marriage and dating. Participants also endorsed typical conflicts related to maturation (i.e., time management, school habits, etc.).

Women in the sample were also asked to consider adaptive characteristics, such as the reward of being Asian Indian in the United States and what they enjoyed about living in the United States. Most women identified aspects of Indian culture, values, and beliefs to be rewarding for them, while others recognized increased opportunity and freedom in the United States to be beneficial. Some participants pinpointed the advantages of having the "best of both worlds" and increased learning and growth experiences. The majority of women reported opportunities for improvement and freedom as what they enjoyed the most about the United States.

Findings from the qualitative data can be linked to several of the main variables in the present study. For instance, second-generation women reported more conflict with parents about marriage and dating. Furthermore, conflicts with parents regarding cultural issues seems to be related to greater gender-role cultural value conflicts. Moreover, general conflict with parents appears to be related to higher feelings of Malayalee attitude marginalization. Qualitative results were also significantly related to depressive symptoms and self-esteem. For example, women who disliked the experience of discrimination reported greater depressive symptoms. This finding can be supported from a previous study on Asian Indians, which indicated perceived prejudice is associated with poor mental health (Mehta, 1998). Alternatively, women who disliked the religious decline of the United States reported fewer depressive symptoms and

higher self-esteem. It can be assumed these women may be more religious and these religious beliefs likely serve as protective factors.

Implications

Considerable clinical implications have emerged from the present study for professionals who may potentially work with immigrant women from Kerala. First, the significance of generational status has been established. Generational status appears to be key in acculturation and mental health. Second-generation immigrants become more behaviorally oriented towards the dominant culture; this may lead to greater cultural value conflicts. As a result, they may be at increased risk for poorer mental adjustment. Second-generation immigrants may also experience greater conflicts with their parents regarding marriage and dating specifically. Therefore, it is important for practitioners who work with Malayalee women to consider the generational status of their client.

In addition to generational status, discomfort with attitudes, beliefs, values, and ideas of Kerala culture has been found to play a significant role in depressive symptoms. Attitudes of one's home culture, rather than dominant culture, seem to be an important area to evaluate when working with Malayalee women. As with other ethnic groups, assessment of experiences with discrimination and prejudice will also be important for Malayalee women. Moreover, identifying protective factors such as religious beliefs may be useful as well.

Several issues related to family dynamics are also of importance for practitioners working with this population. Like other Asian Indian groups, intergenerational familial conflicts regarding cultural differences also appear to be salient for Malayalee families. Conflicts regarding independence and autonomy also are relevant for Malayalee families. Specifically, it appears maternal overprotection and control plays a prominent role in daughters' self-esteem.

Sensitivity to these family dynamics and an understanding of their impact is crucial for practitioners.

Limitations and Future Directions

Limitations of the present study must be adequately addressed. First, the sample is likely to be biased in two major ways. A majority of the women were recruited through local Keralite religious conventions and conferences. The presence of these women at religious gatherings with others of their ethnicity indicates some level of attachment to their home culture. Furthermore, attending religious functions also indicates a possible strong religious orientation. Religious beliefs and ethnic identity can both serve as protective factors or coping mechanisms. Therefore, women of the study may be better adjusted than other Malayalee women. Future research should actively recruit a more diverse sample, consisting of individuals who are marginalized or choose not to socialize with the Malayalee community.

Another limitation of the study involves the measurement of acculturation. Adapting the ARSMA-II for Malayalee women may not have been the best method to assess for behavioral acculturation. Of particular importance is the difficulty for second-generation immigrants to be identified as Bicultural or strongly oriented towards Malayalee culture. For example, sample items include preference for reading books or writing in an Asian Indian language, preference for watching Asian Indian television programs, and how often one visits India. Scoring high on these items may be difficult for women born in the U.S., who may not have learned to read and write in Malayalam or have had exposure to television programs in Malayalam. Furthermore, visiting India on a frequent basis may not be possible for both generations due to financial reasons. Future research with this population should find a more suitable measure of behavioral

acculturation. An additional critical limitation is the lack of data involving inter-rater agreement for the categories formed from the open-ended questions.

Along with providing informative data regarding Malayalee immigrant women, the study has raised questions that should be addressed in future research. Specifically, many of the study variables, such as generational status, Malayalee marginalization, maternal control, cultural value conflict, depression, and self-esteem were found to be highly correlated to one another. Future research should examine possible causal models that could provide a richer, clearer understanding of how these factors relate to one another and affect Malayalee women. In addition, since the present sample consisted solely of women, upcoming studies should be designed to examine the experience of Malayalee men. Gender comparisons in acculturation, parental control, and psychological adjustment would prove to supply valuable information.

The number of immigrants in the United States continues to increase. The field of psychology has a unique opportunity to fully understand the immigrant experience via research and apply this knowledge while working with immigrants in clinical practice. The research presented currently has provided significant insight about a population that was previously invisible. The knowledge provided gives further direction for future researchers as well as suggestions for practitioners. Efforts of researchers and practitioners will assist in providing U.S. immigrants with improved quality of life.

Table 1

Frequencies for Demographic Variables

Demographic variables	*n*	Percentage
Marital status		
Single	42	57.5%
Married	31	42.5%
Household composition		
Alone	5	6.8%
Husband/life partner	30	41.1%
Children	17	23.3%
Parents	38	52.1%
Siblings	29	39.7%
Other	10	13.7%
Education level		
High school	9	12.3%
Vocational training	3	4.1%
Some college	24	32.9%
Bachelor's degree	18	24.7%
Some graduate work	7	9.6%
Master's degree	11	15.1%

(table continues)

Table 1 (*continued*).

Demographic variables	*n*	Percentage
Occupational status		
Professionals	25	34.2%
Middle Class	7	9.6%
Working Class	1	1.4%
Unemployed/Retired	6	8.2%
Student	30	41.1%
No answer	4	5.5%
Parent's level of education		
Grammar school	7	9.6%
High school	9	12.3%
Other vocational training	2	2.7%
Some college	20	27.4%
Bachelor's degree	21	28.8%
Some graduate work	1	1.4%
Master's degree	12	16.4%
Ph.D./M.D./J.D.	1	1.4%
Mother's occupation		
Professional	36	49.4%
Middle Class	6	8.2%

(table continues)

Table 1 *(continued)*.

Demographic variables	*n*	Percentage
Working Class	5	6.8%
Unemployed/Retired	20	27.4%
No answer	6	8.2%
Father's occupation		
Professional	33	45.2%
Middle Class	17	23.3%
Working class	6	8.2%
Unemployed/Retired	9	12.3%
No answer	8	11%
Birth country		
India	32	43.8%
United States	31	42.5%
Other	10	13.7%
Marital status at arrival		
Single	33	78.6%
Married	9	21.4%

(table continues)

Table 1 *(continued)*.

Demographic variables	*n*	Percentage
Ethnic identification		
Indian	32	43.8%
Asian American	8	11%
Indian American	32	43.8%
Other	1	1.4%
Cultural identification		
Very Indian	6	8.6%
More Indian than American	13	18.6%
Bicultural	39	55.7%
More American than Indian	11	15.7%
Very American	1	1.4%

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	*M*	*SD*	Range
Age	28.01	11.03	18-63
Arrival age to U.S.	13.56	10.14	1-33
Number of years mother in U.S.	27.84	4.38	19-37
Number of years father in U.S.	27.91	4.16	19-35
ARSMA-II total score	.30	.92	-2.34-2.04
Anglo orientation subscale	3.79	.56	2.31-4.77
Malayalee orientation subscale	3.49	.57	2.35-4.82
Anglo marginalization	17.01	5.52	6-28
Malayalee marginalization	18.40	5.10	6-30
Rosenberg total score	20.21	6.19	1-30
CES-D-10 total score	9.21	5.63	0-25
CVCS total score	80.94	12.53	48-108
Intimate Relations subscale	44.62	7.10	20-57
Sex Role Expectation subscale	38.50	8.16	16-56
Paternal control	17.52	5.76	7-36
Maternal control	17.75	5.55	5-37

Table 3

Differences Based on Marital Status

Variables	Single		Married				
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Acculturation	0.47	0.88	0.08	0.95	1.81	ns	–
Anglo orientation	3.95	0.48	3.59	0.61	2.83	.01	.67
Malayalee orientation	3.48	0.60	3.51	0.52	-0.22	ns	–
Anglo marginalization	17.62	5.22	16.19	5.90	1.09	ns	–
Malayalee marginalization	19.48	4.53	16.94	5.53	2.16	.04	.51
Self-esteem	18.40	6.50	22.65	4.85	-3.06	.00	-.73
Depressive symptoms	10.02	5.58	8.10	5.59	1.46	ns	–
Cultural value conflict	84.88	10.86	78.55	10.12	2.53	.01	.60
Paternal control	17.54	5.55	17.50	6.17	0.03	ns	–
Maternal control	19.07	5.47	15.93	5.21	2.44	.02	.59

Table 4

Differences Based on Generational Status

Variables	1st generation		2nd generation				
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Acculturation	-0.04	0.94	0.77	0.67	-4.10	.00	-.97
Anglo orientation	3.61	0.61	4.06	0.36	-3.66	.00	-.87
Malayalee orientation	3.65	0.59	3.28	0.46	2.84	.01	.67
Anglo marginalization	16.57	5.71	17.61	5.28	-0.80	ns	–
Malayalee marginalization	17.93	5.69	19.03	4.18	-0.91	ns	–
Self-esteem	21.17	5.89	18.90	6.44	1.56	ns	–
Depressive symptoms	7.62	4.69	11.35	6.14	-2.95	.00	-.70
Cultural value conflict	78.62	10.54	87.03	9.67	-3.50	.00	.83
Paternal control	16.84	5.72	18.35	5.80	-1.09	ns	–
Maternal control	16.40	4.97	19.48	5.85	-2.40	.02	-.58

Table 5

Intercorrelations among Demographic Variables

Demographics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Marital status[a]	–									
2. Generational status[b]	-.30*	–								
3. Age in years	.65**	-.35**	–							
4. Highest degree[c]	.33**	.10	.46*	–						
5. Job status[d]	.51**	-.05	.50*	.50**	–					
6. Parent's highest degree[c]	-.22	.45**	-.49*	-.01	-.15	–				
7. Mom's job status[d]	-.29*	.47**	-.50*	-.01	-.18	.44**	–			
8. Dad's job status[d]	.22	.18	-.01	.10	.01	.47**	.37**	–		
9. Arrival age	.47**	n/a	.70*	.47**	.36*	-.51**	-.45**	.08	–	
10. Mom years in US	.28	.35	.56*	.32	.16	.20	.06	.03	n/a	–
11. Dad years in US	.14	.33	.56*	.37*	.12	.31	.19	.03	n/a	.86**

Note: [a]Coded 0 = single; 1 = married; [b]Coded 0 = 1st generation; 1 = 2nd generation; [c]Coded 1 = grammar school, 2 = high school, 3 = other vocational training, 4 = some college, 5 = bachelor's degree, 6 = some graduate work, 7 = master's degree, 8 = PhD/JD/MD; [d]Coded -1 = unknown, 0 = student, 1 = unskilled employees, 2 = semiskilled employees, 3 = skilled manual employees, 4 = sale workers, technicians, and small business owners, 5 = administrative and minor professionals, 6 = medium professionals, 7 = major professionals; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 6

Correlations among Demographics and Independent Variables

Demographic	AOS	MOS	Acc.	AM	MM	PC	MC
Marital status [a]	-.32**	.03	-.21	-.13	-.25*	-.00	-.28*
Generational status [b]	.40**	-.32**	.44**	.09	.11	.13	.28*
Age in years	-.47**	.13	-.37*	-.08	-.11	-.10	-.33**
Highest degree [c]	-.03	-.08	.03	-.11	-.07	.24*	-.19
Job status [d]	-.07	.06	-.08	-.15	-.15	.02	-.17
Parent's highest degree [c]	.45**	-.51**	.58**	.03	.03	.18	.18
Mom's job status [d]	-.09	-.34**	.27*	-.02	-.12	.18	-.10
Dad's job status [d]	.52**	-.36**	.53**	-.08	-.08	.33**	.16
Arrival age	-.68**	-.32	-.65**	-.14	-.13	-.21	-.41*
Mom years in U.S	.17	-.30	.30	-.14	-.02	.04	-.05
Dad years in U.S.	.21	-.26	.29	.03	.03	-.02	-.13

Note. AOS = Anglo-orientation, MOS = Malayalee-orientation, Acc = Acculturation, AM = Anglo-Marginalization, MM = Malayalee Marginalization, PC = Paternal control, MC = Maternal control
Note. [a] Coded 0 = Single, 1 = Married, [b] Coded 0 = 1st generation, 1 = 2nd generation, [c] Coded 1 = Grammar school, 2 = High School, 3 = Other vocational training, 4 = Some college, 5 = Bachelor's degree, 6 = Some graduate work, 7 = Master's degree, 8 = Ph.D./J.D./M.D., [d] Coded –1 Unknown, 0 = Student, 1 = Unskilled employees, 2 = Semiskilled employees, 3 = Skilled manual employees, 4 = Sale Workers, Technicians, and Small business owners, 5 = Administrative and Minor professionals, 6 = Medium professionals, 7 = Major professionals
* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$ (one-tailed)

Table 7

Intercorrelations among Predictor and Outcome Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Acc.	-								
2. AOS	.82**	-							
3. MOS	-.82**	-.34**	-						
4. AM	-.15	-.08	.16	-					
5. MM	.16	.29*	.03	.20	-				
6. SE	-.08	-.19	-.05	-.03	-.31**	-			
7. Dep Sx	.11	.24*	.05	.07	.40**	-.41**	-		
8. CVC	.29*	.34*	-.13	.12	.42**	-.41**	.46**	-	
9. PC	.21	.23	-.13	-.16	.03	.06	.05	.17	-
10. MC	.19	.23	-.08	.16	.27*	-.30**	.10	.42**	.50**

Note. Dep Sx = Depressive symptoms, SE = Self-esteem, CVC= Cultural value conflict, Acc. = Acculturation, AOS = Anglo-orientation, MOS = Malayalee-orientation, AM = Anglo Marginalization, MM = Malayalee Marginalization, PC = Paternal control, MC= Maternal control
* = p <.05, ** = p <.01. (one-tailed)

Table 8

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Parental Control Predicting Self-Esteem

	Block 1			Block 2			Block 3		
	B	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β
Marital Status	2.16	1.90	.17	2.11	1.91	.17	1.51	1.89	.12
Education	.56	.56	.12	.49	.59	.11	.23	.59	.05
Age	.13	.10	.19	.13	.10	.20	.13	.10	.19
Paternal control				.06	.13	.06	.24	.15	.22
Maternal control							-.35	.17	-.30*
Adjusted R^2			.10			.09			.14
R^2 change			.15			.00			.06
F (3, 63)			3.56*						
F (4,62)						2.70*			
F (5, 61)									3.19**

Note: *p< .05, **p< .01.

Table 9

Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Mediator Model—Dependent Variable: Depression

	Block 1			Block 2		
	B	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β
Anglo Orientation	2.36	1.16	.24*	.87	1.12	.09
CVC				.22	.06	.44**
Adjusted R^2			.04			.20
R^2 change			.06			.17
F (1, 70)			4.17*			
F (1, 70)						10.01**

Note: CVC = Cultural value conflict
*$p < .05$, **$p = .00$

Table 10

Summary of Exploratory Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Depression

	Block 1			Block 2			Block 3		
	B	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β
Generation	3.74	1.27	.33*	3.93	1.42	.35*	3.73	1.31	.33*
Acculturation				-.24	.76	-.04	-.56	.71	-.09
Malayalee Marginalization							.42	.12	.38*
Adjusted R^2			.10			.09			.22
R^2 change			.11			.00			.14
F (1, 71)			8.69*						
F (2, 70)						4.34*			
F (3, 69)									7.74**

Note: *p<. 01, **p<. 001

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